



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

# COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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## CONNECTICUT'S COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY CALLS FOR CHANGES IN THE STATE'S BOTTLE REDEMPTION LAW

**Link below to read the Council's Report: "Low Deposit, Low Return"**

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CEQ/Low-Deposit-Low-Return.pdf> )

**Hartford, October 28, 2020** - In a special report, "*Low Deposit, Low Return*" the State's Council on Environmental Quality documents the relationship between the deposit fee on beverage containers and the rate at which those containers are returned. Connecticut's redemption rate for beverage containers is approximately fifty percent, and dropping. The report projects that based on the experience of other states, a five-cent increase could raise beverage container redemptions by, at least, fifty percent above the current level. Additionally, an expansion of the types of containers eligible for return would further reduce the burden and expense that beverage containers present when they are needlessly disposed of into the solid waste stream.

"The historical failure of bills to update Connecticut's beverage container legislation, the current emphasis by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) on extended producer responsibility and the potential loss of waste-to-energy capacity made this the right time to issue the report", said Keith Ainsworth, acting Chair of the Council.

The report describes how bottle redemption results in cleaner recyclables that have a higher value in the recycling market and is far less costly than disposing of a beverage container as trash. "Those reasons alone make redemption the preferred alternative to simply recycling", said Peter Hearn, the Council's Executive Director. "It is irrefutable that increasing the rebate to the consumer will increase the rate at which containers are redeemed, and consequently removed from the waste stream", he said.

The report projects that if an increase of the deposit fee to ten-cents resulted in a seventy-five percent redemption rate, there would be no effect on the revenue the State receives from unclaimed deposit fees. "It is

important to note that revenue generation was not the purpose of the original bottle bill”, said Hearn. “Though the State’s receipts could begin to decline as the redemption rate rises above seventy-five percent, that could be partially offset by an increase in the categories of containers that are subject to deposit”, he said. “Of greater importance is the fact that the presence of deposit beverage containers in the waste stream costs residents money. Ultimately, they pay for the collection, processing, and disposal of the unredeemed beverage containers.”

The report also calls for DEEP to assess the true cost of the collecting, storing, and shipping redeemed beverage containers; and recommend to the Legislature an appropriate increase in the handling fee to benefit retailers and redemption centers. Further, it calls for DEEP, in consultation with retailers, manufacturers and recycling businesses in the state, to develop recommendations for recycled content requirements for products sold in the state and, additionally, for multi-state coordination in the development of such recycled content standards.

The full report, along with other special reports by the Council, are available on the Council’s website, [www.ct.gov/ceq/publications/special-reports](http://www.ct.gov/ceq/publications/special-reports) .

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### **About the Council**

Established in 1971, the Council on Environmental Quality submits Connecticut’s annual report on the status of the environment to the Governor pursuant to section 22a-12 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Additional responsibilities of the Council include review of construction projects of other state agencies, publication of the twice-monthly Environmental Monitor, and investigation of citizens’ complaints and allegations of violations of environmental laws.